UNITY. FREEDOM.

THE

Unitarian

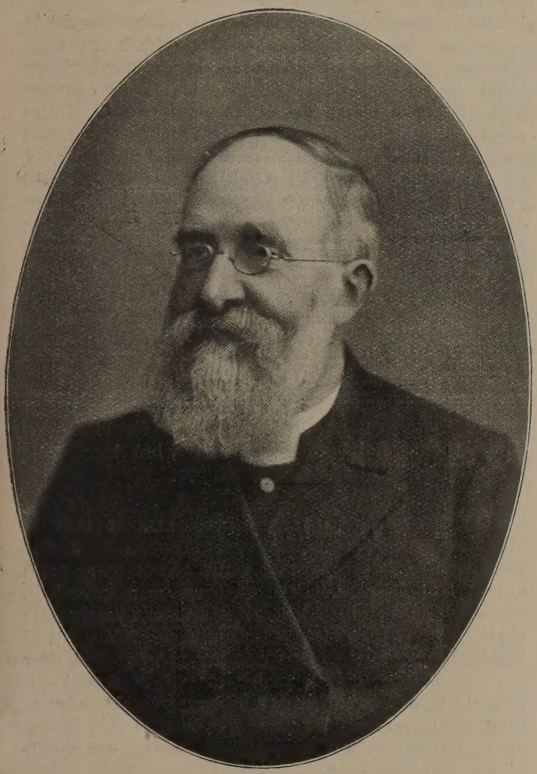
MONTHLY.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

FAITH. FELLOWSHIP.

No. 63. [Vol. V.—12] December, 1908. ONE PENNY.



Rev. HENRY WILLIAMSON, Dundee.

Born at Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey; reared in the midst of Unitarians, he has been Unitarian from childhood. Amongst those who influenced him in youth were the Revs. Maxwell Davidson, John Robertson, and Joseph Smith; Mr. and Mrs. John Cooke, of Guildford, and the Ellises and the Potters. Emigrated to America at 18, and served his time as a carpenter; joined the Universalist Church, Norwich, Connecticut, where the minister, the Rev. Benjamin Whittemore, advised him to study for the ministry. In 1861, Mr. Williamson returned to England, and in 1862 was admitted as a student at the Unitarian Home Missionary Board (now College), and at the end of his college training he undertook the task of reviving the Unitarian movement in Dundee. Since his settlement, Feb. 1866, the church, with schoolrooms and vestry, was built (1870), and the Dundee congregation has long been a live and active centre of Christian influences. Through Mr. Williamson's efforts Unitarianism secured the services of the Rev. Alexander Webster at Perth and Kirkcaldy (1875); he commenced Sunday services at Carlisle Oct. 1883, following a course of week-night lectures with discussion—where now for many years there has been a church building with a settled minister; in co-operation with the Rev. Robert Spears and Mr. J. M. Wade he started "The Christian Disciples' Union." From Feb. 18th, 1866, there has never been a Sunday in Dundee without a Unitarian service, for Mr. Williamson has no sympathy with closing a church even in holidays. Space will not suffice for adequate notice of Mr. Williamson's public activities outside his regular ministry, including the forming of the Dundee and District Mill and Factory Operatives' Union, 1885, of which he is still honorary president, and the Editorship of a monthly sheet entitled the "Mill and Factory Herald."

Varieties.

We hold the name "Unitarian" in no narrower sense than that of a movement to unite the best spirit and method of all denominations in a peace that might be universal. Unitarian is etymologically opposed to sectarian. Its root and fundamental idea is unity. We are turning to the root of the word in which its historical meaning and real spirit lie; we proclaim our faith in unity—the unity of religion in righteousness, the unity of men with each other and with nature, and the unity of all in God.

—Henry Martyn Simmons.

"All the sunshine does not come out of the sky; the best kind comes out of the heart."

To the Rev. Henry Williamson,

UNITARIAN MINISTER, DUNDEE.

Thou who in Christ's eternal name
Canst make the common ground a fane
Where we can worship God.
'Gainst orthodoxy thou canst fight
And lift thy soul to grasp the light
Now surging far abroad.

Not bound to churches or their creeds;
Thou thinkest more of upright deeds
Than words however true.
May heaven grant thee a long career
To live and preach the gospel here,
For thou hast much to do.

The ignorance of the lowly poor
On Bible themes O do thou cure,
Nor husband any good,
Which thou by ministering to them,
Our sisters and our brother men,
Will be to them rich food.

Therefore go on as thou art doing;
The sense of holy scripture showing
In its divinest worth;
Thou wilt be bless'd and bless indeed,
For thou art of the sterling seed,
The future shall bring forth.

—James Donald (a working man).

Dundee, 1867.

The Soul Wins.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle," "For All or None," Etc.

CHAPTER XII.

"It strikes me, Mr. McCracken, that your son is not a very orthodox young man," said Peter Bream one day.

"'Orthodox,' do you say, Mr. Bream? Well, I don't know as I quite grasp what you mean. Do you think there is something wrong about him?"

"No, I did not say that; and I don't know as I would say that. But he has rather unusual ideas about religion; and I believe he has infected my Patty's mind with them. But I would not say that there is any wrong in that—not at all. But he has opinions of his own which are not those of most people."

"I am sorry to say it is so," said Mr. McCracken. "But, of course, he's old enough to judge for himself and it's a matter on which it is no use a father attempting to dictate. It might do more harm than good."

"Of course it would. And why should you be sorry? It's nothing to be ashamed of. It shows that he has brains and that he uses them. It would not be right for you or anybody else to dictate to him. I admire a man who can give a reason for what he does and for what he believes; and that's what your Jim can do. I've no patience with people who believe this, that, and the other simply because their fathers and grandfathers believed that way. What's the use of having more light if it makes no difference to people's ways of thinking? You may depend upon it, Mr. McCracken, we have not got all the truth yet; and those who are looking for more and willing to take it when they see it, they are the right sort of people."

"Perhaps so; perhaps so, Mr. Bream. But these new notions cause a lot of controversy and unpleasantness. People say nasty things about our Jim; and some of them, if they could, would make him suffer for his opinions."

"Well, what of that? What a wretched world it would be if we were all compelled to think one way. Nothing new; no freshness, no variety; everybody blind to everything except fashion and custom. Ugh! life wouldn't be worth the having. I admire a man like Daniel who had a mind of his own and was prepared to suffer rather than be false to it. I like to think of good old Hugh Latimer, who would even endure being burnt at the stake rather than deny what he thought was true. And do we not praise the Master Christ himself for his noble sacrifice on the Cross for the sake of his principles? In a struggle against a cowardly and a selfish world these noble spirits are the saviours of men. Even if their bodies are slain their souls gain the victory. They are not the slaves of their surroundings, their environment, as some people put it, but in spite of circumstances they carve a way of their own and make it easier for others to follow them. Bah! let people say what they will, your Jim's one of the right sort."

* * * * * *

Patty Bream had changed her name to that of McCracken. She and Jim were married. It was the union of two congenial souls. They were each other's true helpers. Because they were united in the bonds of unselfish love their life was bright and their lot was sweet. Difficulties, trials, and troubles came to them, as to other people; but they were as passing clouds which served to reveal the full glory of the sunshine the more completely as they disappeared. Life was light, it was joy, it was sweet content, it was harmony, it was as the music of an exquisite song.

Is it not true that if there be heaven within it is possible to see much more of heaven outside? Jim saw the world through clearer eyes. He had learnt much, and it was not lost upon him. He had fought a fight; he had triumphed against difficulties; he had become a new man; his soul had won in the struggle.

And with faith in God, and faith in man, his mind open always to the light, and cheered by visions of the coming time, the Christmas song was even richer in meaning to him:

"Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

John Milton—Born December 9th, 1608.

The Tercentenary of the birth of John Milton will be celebrated this month wherever the English tongue is spoken, and in many foreign lands where his character and eminent services are rightly appreciated. We would, too, though in a humble manner, add our tribute to his glorious memory in these pages.

John Milton was great as a scholar, learned in all the classical lore of the schools, familiar with Hebrew, Greek, Latin, with French, Italian, and other languages of his time; he was great as a poet—next to Shakespeare, the greatest in all English literature; he was great as a controversialist in politics, in ecclesiastical disputes, and pre-eminently as the advocate of civil and religious liberty—of mental and spiritual freedom; he was great as a prose writer, a wonderful master of his native tongue, making it marvellously expressive of the finest imagery and of the loftiest conceptions of truth—freedom—virtue—and nobility of life; but he was greatest as a man, for the purity of his life, for his love of virtue, for his moral strength and firmness in the midst of troubles and trials—unshakeable as a rock in the midst of storms—for his loyalty to truth and his nobility of character.

Born in London, December 9th, 1608; educated at St. Paul's School; sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, 1625, where he was styled "lady" on account of his delicacy and beauty and morality. At the University he gained great fame in learning, and composed a number of poems. He was intended for the ministry—but in 1632 he made known his decision not to enter the church, refusing to take orders, in which he must "subscribe slave" and perjure his faith. Continuing his studies in retirement for five years, and writing more poems, he then, in 1638, travelled in Italy, and visited Galileo, a prisoner of the Inquisition at Florence. He returned to England at the end of 1639, to become immersed in the troubles of the struggle between King and Parliament, and for twenty years, 1640-1660, "he was carried out of art into politics, out of poetry into prose." In four years he published no less than eleven vigorous pamphlets, including five against Episcopacy, and the famous "Areopagitica"—a speech for the liberty of the press. He defended the execution of Charles in 1649 by the issue of "Iconoclastes," in reply to the royalist "Eikon Basilike," and again in his Latin "Defence of the People of England" against Salmasius, which spread his fame throughout Europe. He was made Latin Secretary to Cromwell after he had wholly lost his eyesight. Before Cromwell died he began "Paradise Lost," which had been partly conceived at least twenty years earlier. Six pamphlets came from his pen against the Restoration when he saw it coming. For a time he was in hiding and even in custody, and there seemed a probability that he would be put to death. But his world-wide fame, and the universally high estimate of his character, doubtless deterred Charles II. from proceeding to such an extremity. He was permitted to live in quiet retirement. "Paradise Lost" was finished 1665, and published 1667, and was followed by "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" in 1671, and the poet died in 1674.

Of his poetry Stopford Brooke says: "To the greatness of the artist Milton joined the majesty of a pure and lofty character. His poetic style was as lofty as his character, and proceeded from it." His poetical inspiration came first from Spenser, and he imbibed the finest characteristics of the Elizabethan period to such an extent that he is called "the last of the Elizabethans, and, except Shakespeare, far the greatest of them all."

There are indications in "Paradise Lost" and still more in "Paradise Regained" that Milton was not a Trinitarian. And when in 1823 his long-lost tratise on Christian Doctrine—"De Doctrina Christiana"—was discovered amongst certain State papers, and then published, it was made perfectly clear that he was as anti-Trinitarian as he could be—as we have previously shown in these pages. This publication provoked the two notable essays on Milton by Lord Macaulay and Dr. W. E. Channing. In the latter Channing says: "We must thank God that he has raised up this illustrious advocate of the long-obscured doctrine of the Divine Unity."

Macaulay, towards the conclusion of his essay, pays the following noble tribute to Milton as a man:—"There are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton."

In times of national stress and trial most readily have the minds of men remembered John Milton, the resolute and the incorruptible patriot. Even in our day it is not unfitting to echo Wordsworth:—

"Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour;
England hath need of thee. . . .
Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

There is no more hazardous enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapours, and to brave the terrible explosion. Those who most disapprove of his opinions must respect the hardihood with which he maintained them.—Macaulay.

Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy.—Emerson.

What to Teach.—IX. ACCOUNTABILITY.

"What we owe"—decides our accountability. It is the account of our debt, for which we are each of us responsible.

But it has another side. Besides that which we owe to God and humanity, for what has been already done for us, there is an account against us for what is now being done for our safety and welfare. You are safe from being disturbed from your sleep to-night,—but why? It must be due to the good dispositions of the people by whom you are surrounded, otherwise they might break in upon and injure you. Your house is never robbed,—and what is the reason? It is because your neighbours respect you and protect your right of property. There is no disease in your locality to put your bodily life into jeopardy—because the people in your community are careful to have good drains, clean streets and houses, and to keep themselves free from filth. Through the peaceableness, orderliness, and cleanliness of the people amongst whom you live you are safe and you are protected in the opportunity to live.

Yet suppose all this is reversed; that the people are not peaceable, that you are in danger of violent attack by day or night, of your house being robbed, of your house and streets being foul with filth and neglect and subject to the dangers of plague and pestilence: then what a difference,—you are never safe, with everything against you, life is scarce worth a pin's fee.

So much are we all dependent upon one another that our safety is entirely in the hands of others. Each person is only one in the midst of many. If life is safe, if welfare is secure, it can only be through the efforts of others to make it secure and to protect us from danger. And that security depends entirely upon each person doing all that is possible to maintain it. If a foolish person in a spirit of mischief sets fire to your house in the night while you are asleep, that destroys the safety of the whole community, besides possibly causing your untimely death. For with such a dangerous person at large no one is safe. If a man injures you he may injure anyone. No one can tell whose turn may be next. Everything we do is either good or bad for everyone else; it either helps or hinders, protects or endangers them. No one can live to himself alone. Not only his deeds and words affect others, but even his thoughts—his silent influence. Each person is himself a centre to the whole world of humanity sending out light or dark, sweetness or poison, peace or war, joy or sorrow, life or death.

Hence each one of us is accountable—responsible to humanity, and to God—for his conduct. If we are each of us careful to do right, to consider others, to feel that they are all in our keeping—we are strengthening the security and safety of all; but if heedless, careless, indifferent, and thinking only of ourselves—we shall be a source of danger to everybody. We cannot be too careful, either of our conduct or of our influence. Woe unto us if we are not careful! In ways we think not, shall we have to answer for our dangerous conduct.

But how far and to what extent is each of us accountable. There are some who seem to think that we are not accountable at all, that we have no free-will of our own, and cannot choose for ourselves whether we will do this or that. They tell us that we are helpless in the grip of heredity (inherited cravings and inclinations) and environment (or surroundings); therefore entirely creatures of circumstances, and consequently not individually responsible for any of our actions. If that view be true then conscience is a fraud in every man, and the natural instinct to praise certain actions and to blame others in our fellows is a cheat and a delusion. If there is no power of self-direction and each man is the helpless slave of inherited tendencies and outside circumstances, there can be no praise or blame, and every kind of punishment is unjust. In this view there can be no good men, no bad men; no man is any better or nobler than his fellows; and morality is only an empty name.

But the facts of life point the other way. Men do succeed in resisting inherited cravings, and they act in opposition to surrounding circumstances. Men overcome their injurious habits and replace them with habits that are safe; and they change circumstances, they create new surroundings, they effect improvement and reform. The examples of such as St. Augustine, Francis of Assisi, John Howard, Lloyd Garrison, Dorothea Dix, and Jesus of Nazareth, with hosts of others—indeed, every individual experience, confirm the doctrine of ability and responsibility. But how far is each responsible? To the extent of his ability. A man chained to a post on the river's brink cannot save another from drowning, and cannot be held responsible for neglecting the attempt; but if he were free and made no attempt he would be rightly held accountable for making no effort. No man can do more than he can. He is accountable for what he can do. The helpless infant is not accountable at all; the strong man is responsible for the use of his strength. From each according to his ability—that is the true moral standard. From him to whom much is given shall much be required, and from him to whom little is given shall little be required. Justice requires each man to be his best, and to do his best according to his ability, and all who do that—however their several ability may differ—are of equal merit, equally deserving of commendation and praise.

In each one there is the power to help or injure; to light the fires of destruction, or to strengthen the things that make for life. For the help we receive; for the protection secured to us by those around us—we owe to all others the help we can give and protection to them. Let none of us put a stumbling-block in his brother's way! Woe to that man by whom the occasions of stumbling come! But blessed is he who at the reckoning is found faithful—for the judgment of him will be his joy and blessing.

Postal Mission Work.

By MISS FLORENCE HILL,

Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers 'Union.

I should like to thank my friends and co-workers in the Postal Mission, more particularly the secretaries of affiliated missions, for their kind and sympathetic response to my appeal in the last issue of the "Unitarian Monthly" to obtain financial help for the new Unitarian Hall at Coalville. The unusually large number of appeals before the public just now makes it very difficult to contribute large sums, but many have promised to do what they could. Mrs. Noel Johnson, of the Manchester Postal Mission, wrote that she had been collecting for months, and that she considered the Coalville cause a "foster child" of Manchester, as they had done so much from their Mission to encourage the cottage services and interest the B. and F. Unitarian Association in the movement. Mr. Goacher writes—"We have now started a Sunday School in the new Hall, and are much in need of Bibles and Hymn Books. We gave a social to the children in the locality; about 112 came, they much enjoyed the evening and the coffee and buns we supplied. Many of the parents came, too. The children have asked us to start a Band of Hope."

The president and secretary of the Central Postal Mission visited the Suffolk Village Mission, on the occasion of the Anniversary Meetings at Bedfield and Framlingham. They were pleased to find that the new Club-room, added last year, had been in full use ever since erection, and has proved a pleasant meeting place for the Men's Club, as well as being available for the Women's Afternoon Sewing Meetings. The room looks light and cosy, and the walls have been brightened by pictures kindly presented by Mr. Grundy and the Kyrle Society. It is, however, sad to find how much bitter persecution the attendants at the chapel have to undergo, both from orthodox dissenters and the Church. The insidious alternate threats and bribes are equally detrimental to free religious life. The clergy in that part of Suffolk rule the schools, and not only firmly suppress any expression of liberal thought amongst the teachers, but make it very unhappy for dissenters (particularly Unitarians), and take care to exclude them from any favours or gifts. The farmers, too, are determined to keep the labourers down, and in spite of Mr. Newell's strenuous efforts, not a single acre has been granted to them under the new Act. I feel very strongly that those Unitarians who are independent ought to hold it a sacred duty to co-operate with and encourage their co-religionists in out-of-the-way spots, where they labour under such great disadvantages. It needs rare courage and self-sacrifice to hold one's own against such difficulties; it is so much easier to shut up the little chapel in the back lane, and go with the flourishing, well-dressed crowd to church; but Wesley's followers did not do this, and how wonderfully they have increased and won a position. Our Unitarian forefathers clung to their old meeting-houses, in spite of much bitter persecution, and every such building is a standing witness to the need of faithfulness to religious convictions. In these days of motor-cars, and cycles, and quick trains, no places in the British Isles are really remote, if the will and the heart are there, and there is a desire to visit them and help them.

The advertisements in the "Christian Commonwealth" (the Rev. J. R. Campbell's organ) are bringing us into communication with earnest and devout men, who appear to be in agreement with much of the Unitarian teaching, and are eager for literature, more particularly for enlightened Bible criticism. "The League of Progressive Thought and Social Service" seems to be spreading rapidly. The members are full of enthusiasm and hope, and of deep religious conviction. In a letter received from one of them lately occurs this passage:—

> "Beneath all creeds, dogmas, and mere professionalism there must needs be something more—something deeper—the secret of which, thank God, is an experience brought about by a realisation of that which Jesus taught: 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter . . . even the Spirit of Truth . . . for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." It seems to me so few realise the grand possibilities and the joy and the peace to be found in the consciousness of the truth taught by Jesus. It acts like an impelling force drawing men onward to better and nobler things. Prejudice obscures God from the light of reason. Blessed are the pure in heart, the child-like in spirit, and the poor who really know they are poor, for they shall be brought into a happier realisation of the truth taught by Jesus.' And again—'I fail to see the dividing line between the Christ of Martineau, Brooke, and Hopps, and the Christ of Campbell. . . . There seems to be a hunger after a deeper spiritual experience to-day. I believe the cause of the church being empty to-day lies in the dogmas one is supposed to swallow, which are unreal and unreasonable."

Letters such as these breathe the true spirit of brotherhood and Christianity, and inspire one with hope that a nobler form of Christianity may rise up.

"Out of the fierce struggle and turmoil of contending systems and powers I see a brighter spiritual era slowly emerge—an era in which there shall be no England, no France, no Germany, no America, no this people or that, but one family, the human race; one law, peace; one need, harmony; one means, labour; one taskmaster, God."—Helen Keller.

If a man die shall he live again?
The question makes the answer plain.
God would not put the query in our mind
Unless the wished-for answer we shall find.
Our questions, let them haunt us still,
God hints at nothing he will not fulfil.

(Dr. Bartol, paraphrased by J. A. Torrey.)

Home Circle.

"Long, long ago, in manger low,
Was cradled from above
A little child, in whom God smiled,
A Christmas gift of love.
When hearts were bitter and unjust,
And cruel hands were strong,
The noise he hushed with hope and trust,
And peace began her song."

QUERIES FOR YOUNG READERS:

Why did Herod cause the infants in Bethlehem to be slaughtered?

Did Herod die before Jesus was born, or after?

What differences are there in the accounts connected with the birth of Jesus as told in Matthew and Luke.

Why is there no mention of the massacre of innocents in Mark, or Luke, or elsewhere in the N.T., except in Matthew?

Compare the secrecy in Matthew concerning the birth, and the publicity, in Luke—what conclusion do you draw?

Did the Massacre happen?

Was Jesus born in Bethlehem?

For every short essay on any two of the questions, not more than 300 words, the Editor will give a bound vol. of "Unity." No essay will be made use of, except by consent of the writer. Name and address should be given.

And we are glad and we will sing,
As in the days of yore:
Come all, and hearts made ready bring
To welcome back once more
The day, when first on wintry earth
A summer change began,
And dawning in a lowly birth
Up rose the light of man!

—T. T. Lynch.

INASMUCH.

For hundreds of years people have prayed to Jesus in opposition to what He said: "When ye pray, say, Our Father!" and little children have been accustomed by such wrong teaching to pray to Jesus instead of to God. A story is told of a Home for Boys, where the boys were at supper one night, and one little fellow said: "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless what Thou has provided," and another looked up and asked: "Why is it that the Lord Jesus never comes? We ask Him every day to sit with us, and He never comes." "Dear child, only believe, and you may be sure He will come," he was told, "for He does not despise our invitation."

"I shall set Him a seat," said the little fellow; and just then there came a knock at the door. A poor frozen apprentice entered begging a night's lodging. He was made welcome; the chair which the child had placed stood waiting for him; every boy wanted him to have his plate, and one was lamenting that his bed was too small for the stranger, who was much touched by such kindly attentions. The little one thinking hard, concluded: "Jesus could not come, and so He sent this poor man in His place." And he was told that this was so, and that every piece of bread and every drink of water we give to the poor, the sick, or the prisoners, for Jesus' sake, we give to Him. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'—This story is good for Christmas time.

"Straightway provide a welcome wide,
Nor wonder why they came;
They stand outside our hearts and bide,
Knocking in Jesus' name."

WHEN WAS JESUS BORN?

Was Jesus born on December 25th? and was Christmas always kept on that day? These queries imply that there are doubts on the subject.

In the first place we must remember that there has been a change in the reckoning of dates. There is what is called New Style and Old Style. In the Old Style of reckoning the Calendar, December 25th was earlier than it is now, for in adopting the New Style in 1752 eleven days were dropped between September 2 and 14, so that what was September 14 in that year was made to count as September 3rd, bringing December 25th eleven days later. So if Jesus were born on December 25th Old Style, He could not have been born December 25th New Style—our present date. Old Christmas Day is January 6th. The question may be asked: Which was it? Christmas was not always kept in December. Clement of Alexandria tells us some people computed that Jesus was born on May 16th. Christmas was once kept by the Eastern Church in January. Chrysostom stated in his time that Christmas had not been celebrated on December 25th more than ten years previously by the Church of Antioch. It was before the middle of the fourth century that the date was fixed. Opinions were divided between May, April, January, and December, and ultimately the opinion of the Christians at Rome gained the upper hand and settled it for December 25th, and this was mainly that it might coincide with and take the place of the Pagan Saturnalia. The fact remains that no one knows when Jesus was born. That He was born, and lived such a grand life, and died such a noble death are more important matters—and for them we have abundant reason to be thankful.

Ye men of strife, forget to-day
Your harshness and your hate;
Too long ye stay the promised years
For which the nations wait.
'Peace on the earth, good will to men!'
Before us goes the star,
That leads us on to holier births
And life diviner far. —F. Z. Hosmer.

Book Notices.

"First and Last Things"— a Confession of Faith and Rule of Life,—by H. G. Wells, 4/6 net; Archibald Constable and Co., Ltd., London.

Mr. Wells is nothing if not original, and in this he has produced a book that is H. G. Wells himself, as frankly as confession can express him. The work is divided into "Metaphysics," "Beliefs," "General Conduct," "Some Personal Things." He criticises metaphysics of the usual type as unreliable and misleading; treatises on logic do not supply rules that guarantee exact truth; and much science is very far from being exact knowledge. Indeed, Mr. Wells maintains that "All propositions are approximations to an elusive truth"; he disputes the "universal range of possible scientific precision," and "this denial of scientific precision is true of all questions of general human relations and attitude." But he makes it clear, nevertheless, that he himself has a faith of his own and definite beliefs. He believes in the ultimate rightness and significance of things; "in something great that is not myself," which is a "personification—entirely different in nature from the personality of a human being" and its limitations. He believes in free-will: "I regard myself as a free responsible person among free responsible persons." But he does not believe in personal immortality. "I am part of an immortality perhaps; but that is different. I am not the continuing thing. I personally am experimental, incidental. I feel I have to do something, a number of things no one else could do, and then I am finished, and finished altogether. Then my substance returns to the common lot. I am a temporary enclosure for a temporary purpose; that served, and my skull and teeth, my idiosyncracy and desire, will disperse, I believe, like the timbers of a booth after a fair."

This is well and clearly put—, but it is not well supported by reasons or argument, and it is too weak to be convincing. If man is—bodily speaking—"a temporary enclosure for a temporary purpose" so far as this sphere is concerned: and if that which is enclosed consists of mind and will and personality, it does not follow that when the skull and teeth are done with, the enclosed personality that owned them is "finished"; indeed, there are very weighty facts and arguments which are against Mr. Wells' assumption, and tell powerfully in support of personal immortality. But we have not space in this notice to say more on such a point. He is sympathetic to real Christianity, and while rejecting the orthodox conception of Christ feels drawn to the human Jesus—"a recovered and restored person" who is "not the Christ the Christians worship."

In the section on "General Conduct," laws of conduct laid down are subservient to a synthesis—a general unity—the collectivist ideal. What is anti-social is evil, and all that agrees with the collective harmony of interests is good. Segregation, isolation, secession—are fragmentation and sin, and violation of the collective consciousness. "It is only when secession is absolutely unavoidable that it is right to secede." He has many suggestive ideas concerning a "Church," "Organised Brotherhood," "Sex," and "Marriage," and other subjects. "The true Church towards which my own thoughts tend will be the conscious illuminated expression of Catholic brotherhood. It must, I think, develop out of the existing medley of Church fragments, and out of all that is worthy in our poetry and literature."

The book is decidedly optimistic. Its closing sentence declares that: "In the ultimate I know, though I cannot prove my knowledge in any way whatever, that everything is right and all things mine." The author's ways of thinking are uncommon ways; he does not look at things as most people look at them; his ideas—many of them—are largely peculiar to himself, and they are expressed in such a manner as to provoke and to suggest thought in the reader along new lines.

To all who are not content to be imprisoned in ruts and who are open to new ideas and ways of regarding life, this is a book to be commended.

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association have issued a volume entitled "Milton, on the Son of God and the Holy Spirit"—from his treatise 'On Christian Doctrine,'—with an introduction by Alexander Gordon, M.A., cloth cr. 8vo., 136 + xvi. pp., 1/6 net; and a pamphlet by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., on "Milton and Religious Freedom," in connection with the Milton Tercentenary.

The National Conference Committee has resolved that it lies outside their functions to join in summoning a meeting of representatives of its churches to consider how to secure a better adjustment of denominational organisations. But whose duty is it if not theirs?

The Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer, of Chicago, has presented 300 books to the Free Library, Ilkley, Yorks.

The Ministers' Benevolent Society (Unitarian) has dispensed £62,889 in 1,480 grants, to individual beneficiaries from October, 1852, to September, 1908.

Our Hastings minister, the Rev. S. Burrows, has been having a newspaper controversy in consequence of an attack on Unitarianism by some of the narrower orthodox, and he has certainly proved a match for his detractors.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell had a crowded congregation when he preached in the chapel of our Manchester College, Oxford, on October 22nd, and at Aberdeen in the Unitarian Church, October 28th.

Quite a number of Unitarians, ministers and others have become members of the League of Progrsssive Thought and Social Service, of which the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., is the founder and President, and the first National Conference meetings of which were held at the City Temple, Monday, November 16th, with large attendances.

The Bible and Sacred Books.

The Unitarian counts all books holy that tell him truth and help him to live. He frankly acknowledges that the Bible is one of six or eight great collections of sacred writings, or Bibles, of mankind, but he claims that, judged by its intrinsic merit, without any reference to the theories of any church, but simply as a human production, it is decidedly superior to any of the others. While there is to be found much to appreciate and admire in the Bibles of the Hindus, Buddhists, Parsees, Chinese, Egyptians, and Mohammedans, none can bear comparison with the Christian. After making the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive error, it may be fearlessly stated that there never has been a whole national literature whose characteristic was to be so steeped and saturated in, so filled and animated by, great religious ideas, and pure and moral purpose. From end to end there is a pervading and unequalled awe and fear of a Divine Power of justice and righteousness. From end to end, that very presence and daily action of this power are brought home to us with intense reality. Can you remember one passage in which impurity is designedly made inviting or alluring, or the passions teased and excited into morbid and destructive action? On the contrary, lust and oppression and injustice are over and over again, in endless passages of impassioned eloquence, or grave remonstrance, reprobated and condemned.

Let us carry the comparison still further.

At the very time that contemporaneous Bibles were trifling with the people, and amusing them with telling them that the world rested on the shoulders of a man, or the back of a tortoise, or was born of an egg, this Bible was, with the simplest seriousness, declaring that it was wisely made, and gradually made, made good and for good, by the good God, and that it remained to this day supported by his Almighty Spirit. At the very time that contemporaneous literatures were preaching and spreading the worship of men and women and children, of stars and animals, and fire and statues, this great Bible, with its earliest breath, was declaring that one good God made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and with its latest that God was a spirit, and they who worshipped him must worship him in spirit and in truth. At the very time that other faiths were opening their temples to the vices and passions, and consecrating them to their service —sacrificing their fellow-creatures to appease the anger of their gods, turning prostitution into religion, and drunkenness into a sacred rite—the Bible was lifting up its grave and earnest voice in rebuke of such enormities, and preaching—sometimes sternly, and sometimes tenderly, but always with an intense earnestness—righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

In the compass of a short article this subject cannot be pursued further; those desirous of knowing what can be said by a Unitarian in just appreciation of the value of our Scripture are referred to "The Bible: What it is and is not," by the Rev. Joseph Wood, to be had from Essex Hall for 6d. No room for quotation from this admirable little book has been found here. —CENTONARIUS.

What Makes the Christian?

It is well known even to Dissenters that there is a Church of England Catechism. There is, too, a booklet which is also widely known, entitled "Some Questions of the Church Catechism briefly explained," by the Rev. F. A. Gace, M.A., vicar of Great Barling, Essex, in which, amongst other equally enlightening statements, are the following, in the form of questions and answers:—

"When were you made a Christian?

A.—When I was baptised.

Can anyone become a Christian without Baptism? A.—No. The Church holds in the case of the martyrs of the early Church, who were desirous of receiving Baptism, but were put to death previously, that the Baptism, as it were, with their blood was equivalent.

In what light must we view those who have never been baptized? A.—As the heathen, whether they be old or young, notwithstanding they may be in the habit of attending divine worship."

But this cannot be true. Many have become Christians without baptism. Will any Church Christians deny that the first apostles were Christians? And if even Mr. Gace would admit that they were, can he or those of his opinion produce evidence that they had to be baptised into the Christian name? And are not many who have been baptised, most un-Christian in their conduct and example? and others who have never been baptised—are they not truly Christian in their lives and characters?

What is it then that makes the Christian? Not any form, ceremony, or rite—not even baptism can do it, but to follow Christ—that does it. Living a Christlike life, doing Christlike work, being Christian in thought, in word, and deed—these are what make a Christian; and without these baptism is as nothing.

To apply Paul's words to Christians which he meant for Jews, we may truly say: "He is not a Christian, which is one outwardly; but he is a Christian, which is one inwardly—of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter." And the words of Jesus are decisive: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother."

Numerous bazaars, sales of work, anniversaries, special services, lectures, etc., have occurred, which the limits of space will not permit of particularisation here.

Mr. Taft was elected to be President of the United States in spite of the opposition of sectarian bigotry which attempted to bring about his defeat on the ground of his being a Unitarian.

Mr. F. J. Kitson is chosen Mayor of Leeds; he is the 13th Unitarian in that position since 1837.

Notes and News.

A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

Unitarians living at a distance from a congenial place of worship should note the advertisement in another column, and write to Lady Wilson. This praiseworthy enterprise is really a church to the "unattached" Unitarians. Lady Wilson has already an encouraging circle of regular members who much appreciate the sermons sent and the ministrations thus received; but there must be many others to whom the opportunity would be a great boon.

Among the many Milton Tercentenary celebrations is one announced by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at Essex Hall, London, Wednesday evening, December 9th, when Dr. Blake Odgers, K.C., will speak on "Milton as Poet"; the Rev. Chas. Hargrove, M.A., on "Milton as Theologian"; and the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., on "Milton as Citizen," and there will be renderings of music illustrating Milton's poetry.

Sunday, December 20th, is set down as "Peace Sunday," on which ministers of all denominations are asked to speak on Peace."

The Rev. T. E. M. Edwards received a present of a pocket-book containing £150 from the Provincial Assembly of London and S.E. Counties at its annual meeting, in token of high appreciation of his services as district minister.

The resolution for the National Conference which appeared in our last issue, and which was drawn up by Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., L.L.B., is postponed till next meeting of Conference Committee, January 19th, so that the scheme of the President, the Rev. Joseph Wood, may be first considered. That scheme is intended for discussion at the National Conference at Bolton in April, and ought certainly to be before the churches not later than February.

A preaching room has been opened at Burslem in the Potteries for regular Unitarian services. At Coalville a Sunday School has been started with encouraging results. Sir E. During Lawrence, Bart., has presented pictures valued at £2,000 to the Lambeth Borough Council; the Church of the Messiah (Unitarian), Birmingham, headed the Hospital Sunday collections in that city in October with £285; the Woolwich Unitarians have opened their work in their newly-acquired Carmel Chapel with special meetings, October 31st; Rev. Joseph Wood, President, National Conference, visited the North Midland district, November 10-19; Rev. R. P. Farley, B.A., is appointed one of the secretaries, National Conference Union for Social Service; Jubilee, St. Mark's Chapel, Edinburgh, celebrated November 14th, and testimonial to the Rev. R. B. Drummond, B.A., its minister; a course of Sunday evening sermons at Unity Church, Islington, by the Rev. E. Savell Hicks, B.A., on "The Unitarian Message," has drawn large attendances; Unitarian lectures have been given at Luton with encouraging results, and it is hoped to begin Sunday services; at the 16th anniversary of the Suffolk Village Mission, October 26th, the minister, Rev. R. Newell received a presentation in appreciation of arduous labours; Miss Jennett Humphreys, in her 80th year, and almost 50 years a devoted worker for our Churches and Domestic Missions, was presented with an illuminated address at the Bell Street Domestic Mission, London, Monday, November 2nd, where she is resigning her position as organist; the British League of Unitarian Women has now fifteen Women's Societies affiliated, an Associate Branch is formed at Liverpool, and the women of the Manchester Churches have resolved to organise themselves into line; Unitarian services at Cambridge are thriving under the Rev. G. Critchley, B.A.; the Rev. T. P. Spedding, as missionary agent of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, has been on a tour of visits to the churches of the Western Unitarian Union during November; included amongst the King's birthday honours was a knighthood conferred upon Mr. Herbert George Fordham, member of a well known Unitarian family; week-night Unitarian lectures were started at Kirkham on November 19th; by completing its Independence Fund (endowment) the Rawtenstall congregation has now declared itself to be self-supporting; the 38th anniversary of the Dundee Church was celebrated by special services and meetings, November 15-16.

Dr. Charles Eliot has notified his intention to retire from his office of President of Harvard University, U.S.A., in 1909, a position he has held with great distinction from 1869. He is an earnest Unitarian, and his son, Dr. S. A. Eliot, is President of the American Unitarian Association.

The American Unitarian Association has issued a new publication entitled "The Unitarian Calendar," a magazine of 16 pp., to serve as a congregational monthly.

MEETINGS: The annual meetings of the Provincial Assembly of London and the South Eastern Counties were held at Maidstone, October 28th; Council Meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London, October 27th; Conference Yorkshire Unitarian Sunday School Union, Huddersfield, October 24th; annual meetings, North Midland Unitarian Association at Leicester. October 27th; National Conference Union for Social Service, Autumn Meeting, Nottingham, November 11th; London Unitarian Laymen's Club, October 30th; National Conference Committee at Birmingham, October 30th; Annual Meeting and Musical Festival of North Cheshire Unitarian S.S. Union at Mossley, October 31st; Yorkshire Unitarian Laymen's Club, Wakefield, November 7th; Autumnal Meeting South Cheshire and District Association of Sunday Schools and Congregations, at Nantwich, November 11th.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES: The Rev. E. I. Fripp has commenced his ministry at the Great Meeting, Leicester; Rev. C. E. Pike, at Bridgwater; Rev. G. V. Crook has been "recognised" as minister at Cork; Rev. G. A. Ferguson has been appoin-

ted to the Pudsey Church; Rev. D. J. Williams, Belper, resigned, and appointed to Killinchy, co. Down; Rev. N. Anderton, B.A., Pendleton, resigned, appointed to Monton; Rev. W. G. Price, resigned, Stalybridge, appointed to Hale, Cheshire; Rev. H. M. Livens, Newport, Isle of Wight, resigned.

DEATHS: Miss Julia Gaskell, Manchester, daughter of the late Rev. William Gaskell, M.A., and Mrs. Gaskell, the novelist, October 24th; Mr. Chas. Vallance, of Mansfield, at Eastbourne, October 13th, 61; Mrs. Cole, Derby, October 17th, 66; Mr. E. B. Stott, Halifax, October 24th, 62; Miss Catherine Aikin, Hampstead, October 25th, 90; Edward Caird, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and "Visitor" to our Manchester College, Oxford; Rev. Frank Walters, Monkseaton, November 3rd, 63; Rev. C. A. Hoddinott, Chichester, November 1st, 81; Mr. R. D. Darbishire, Legatee of the Whitworth Trust, Manchester, November 8th, 82; Sir John Ward, Leeds, November 7th, 64; Mr. Charles Bell, Redcar, November 9th, 82; Miss C. W. Thornton, Worcester, November 1st, 93; Mr. John Pinkerton, J.P., Ballymoney, co. Antrim, November 4th, 63; Mrs. Travis, Styal, November 4th, 66; Miss S. J. Foster, Plymouth, November 8th, 57; Captain W. Davies, President, Welsh Unitarian Association, November 18th, 75; Mrs. N. M. Tayler, Hampton-on-Thames, November 16th, 70; Rev. E. J. Wilkins, Poole, November 13th, 48; Mr. J. L. Lawford, formerly of Knutsford, November 13th, 89.

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— OR —

THE COMMITTEE .

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